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'Hard' Cuba Policy Affirmed by Rusk

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Present Stand Also Upheld in Panama Dispute

By Dan Kurzman
Staff Reporter

Secretary of State Dean Rusk said yesterday that he did not agree with Sen. J. William Fulbright's statement that Cuba was only a "nuisance" and not a "danger" to the Hemisphere.

Rusk reiterated to newsmen what he said at a previous press conference: That the U.S. will not soften its policy toward Cuba until that country severs its military connection with the Soviet Union and stops trying to subvert other Latin American countries.

Rusk, moreover, took issue with the Arkansas Senator's view that the U.S. policy of discouraging world trade with Cuba has failed. He said that although some Free World nations are conducting such trade, this country's allies have offered "substantial" cooperation on this question.

The Secretary emphasized that criticism of some of Fulbright's contentions did not mean that he disapproved of the Senator's attempt to inspire discussion of controversial world issues.

In fact, he said, he agreed with "some things" in the Fulbright speech, which the

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Rusk Disputes Fulbright's Contention That U.S. Cuba Policy Is Failure

Arkansas Democrat read in the Senate on Wednesday. For example, it is true, the Secretary declared, that we are living i na changing world and that the U.S. must understand these changes and react to them appropriately.

He pointed out that as a result of such re-examination, the U.S. has begun to permit limited trade with some Communist countries.

However, while Fulbright's speech was "thoughtful and thought-provoking," Rusk said, it was not a trial balloon for the Administration, but represented the Senator's own views.

The Fulbright speech proved provocative indeed. Many Republicans continued to criticize his call for a "candid re-evaluation" of the Administration's "hard" policy toward Cuba.

Rep. William E. Miller (N.Y.), chairman of the Republican National Committee, demanded that President Johnson repudiate immediately Fulbright's proposal—"if he can."

But one leading Republican, Sen. George D. Aiken (Vt.), shook party leaders when he told the Associated Press that Fulbright was right on Cuba. Aiken is a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Commitee, of which Fulbright is chairman.

Aiken said yesterday that he agreed that Cuba is simply a "nuisance," and that the U.S. economic boycott of Cuba is a failure. Even if this country's allies supported it, he added, "I've never known a country to be starved into democracy."

Aiken said the Eisenhower Administration erred in breaking off diplomatic relations with Cuba when Fidel Castro came to power. "We might have been in a better position to influence some decisions if we had not done so," he declared.

He added that "we were silly, almost childish, in cutting the water pipeline from Cuba to Guantanamo Bay after Castor offered to continue the supply of water. Cuba is neither a military nor an economic threat to us. It is a therat to Latin America as a training ground for subversion, but that is what the Organization of American States was set up to deal with."

Fulbright's speech also appeared to be "thought-provoking" on other subjects. Rusk said, in response to the Senator's suggestion that the U.S. not quibble over words in getting talks started with Panama over the canal issue, that the Administration did not want to give any "pre-commitments" to Panama that might be misinterpreted by the Panamanian people.

This apparently meant the U.S. still was not ready to "negotiate," but only to "discuss," a possible new canal treaty.

Aiken, however, agreed with Fulbright that the U.S. should lead the way in negotiating with Panama "and stop hunting for words."

Nor did Fulbright's statement regarding Communist China go unheeded. The Senator had said that an atmosphere of reduced tensions in the Far East might make possible the strengthening of world peace through the participation of Red China in existing East-West agreements in such fields as disarmament, trade and educational exchange.

Rusk responded that the U.S. was hardly disposed to deal with Peking while it continued to aid the Viet Cong in Viet-Nam; to refuse to renounce the use of force in the Formosa Straits; to support subversion in Africa and Latin America, and to pursue militant and aggressive policies.

Chinese Nationalist Ambassador Tingfu F. Tsiang said he was "shocked" by Fulbright's statement, which could lead to "many more Cubas" if it became U.S. policy.